

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for establishing a peer-to-peer review relationship between a first and a
2 second network-enabled appliance, the first and the second network-enabled appliances being
3 connected to an interconnected network, the method comprising:

4 determining the address of the second network-enabled appliance with the first network-
5 enabled appliance, the address of the second network-enabled appliance being associated with
6 the interconnected network;

7 sending a ping message to the second network-enabled appliance from the first network-
8 enabled appliance through the interconnected network;

9 selectively responding to the ping message from the first network-enabled appliance with
10 the second network-enabled appliance;

11 selectively establishing a periodicity between the sending of subsequent periodic ping
12 messages; and

13 periodically selectively sending subsequent periodic ping messages from the first
14 network-enabled appliance to the second network-enabled appliance through the interconnected
15 network and where the time interval between the subsequent periodic ping messages is
16 associated with the established periodicity.

1 2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the ping message uses an HTTP POST method.

1 3. The method of Claim 1 wherein the ping message uses an FTP method.

1 4. The method of Claim 1, the method further comprising:

2 selectively sending a notification message in the event that an expected periodic ping is
3 not received.

1 5. The method of Claim 4 wherein the notification method is sent to a remote
2 location.

1 6. The method of Claim 4 wherein the notification method is sent to another
2 network-enabled appliance connected to the interconnected network.

1 7. A network-enabled appliance operable to establish a peer-to-peer review
2 relationship, the network-enabled appliance comprising:
3 a processor;
4 a network interface communicatively coupled to the processor, the network interface
5 connected to an interconnected network;
6 a storage medium communicatively coupled to the processor, the storage medium
7 operable to store instruction sets; and
8 an instruction set for establishing a peer-to-peer review relationship with one or more
9 other network-enabled appliances.

1 8. The network-enabled appliance of Claim 7 wherein the processor is a Java-based
2 processor.

1 9. The network-enabled appliance of Claim 7, the network-enabled appliance further
2 comprising:

3 a means for communicating with a remote system.

1 10. The network-enabled appliance of Claim 7, the network-enabled appliance further
2 comprising:

3 at least one sensor communicatively coupled to the processor.

1 11. The network-enabled appliance of Claim 10, the network-enabled appliance
2 further comprising:

3 at least one threshold, the at least one threshold associated with values measured by the at
4 least one sensor.

1 12. The network-enabled appliance of Claim 11, the network-enabled appliance
2 further comprising:

3 an instruction set for sending a notification in response to the at least one threshold being
4 met by the values measured by the at least one sensor.

1 13. A cluster of two or more network-enabled appliances, the cluster comprising:
2 the two or more network-enabled appliances, each connected to an interconnected
3 network, at least one of the two or more network-enabled appliances within the cluster operable
4 to communicate with a remote system; and
5 each of the two or more network-enabled appliances operable to establish one or more
6 peer-to-peer review relationships with one or more other network-enabled appliances within the
7 cluster.

1 14. The cluster of Claim 13 wherein the at least one of the two or more network-
2 enabled appliances within the cluster is operable to communicate with the remote system using
3 an HTTP POST method.

1 15. The cluster of Claim 13 wherein the at least one of the two or more network-
2 enabled appliances within the cluster is operable to communicate with the remote system using
3 an FTP method.

1 16. The cluster of Claim 13 wherein the at least one of the two or more of the
2 network-enabled appliances within the cluster operable to communicate with the remote system
3 acts as an intermediary between the remote system and the other network-enabled appliances
4 within the cluster.

1 17. The cluster of Claim 16 wherein a second of the two or more network-enabled
2 appliances within the cluster is operable to communicate with the remote system and establishes
3 a peer-to-peer review relationship with the at least one of the two or more of the network-enabled
4 appliances within the cluster operable to communicate with the remote system and acting as the
5 intermediary.

1 18. The cluster of Claim 17 wherein the second of the two or more of the network-
2 enabled appliances within the cluster operable to communicate with the remote system
3 selectively assumes a network address of the first of the two or more of the network-enabled
4 appliances within the cluster operable to communicate with the remote system acting as the
5 intermediary in the event that the first of the one or more of the network-enabled appliances
6 within the cluster operable to communicate with the remote system fails.

1 19. A network-enabled appliance operable to establish a peer-to-peer review
2 relationship, the network-enabled appliance comprising:
3 a processor;
4 a network interface communicatively coupled to the processor, the network interface
5 connected to an interconnected network;
6 a storage medium communicatively coupled to the processor, the storage medium
7 operable to store instruction sets;
8 an instruction set for establishing a peer-to-peer review relationship with one or more
9 other network-enabled appliances;

10 an instruction set for communicating with a remote system;
11 at least one sensor communicatively coupled to the processor;
12 at least one stored threshold value, the at least one stored threshold value associated with
13 values measured by the at least one sensor; and
14 an instruction set for sending a notification in response to the at least one stored threshold
15 value being met by the values measured by the at least one sensor.

1 20. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program
2 of instructions executable by the machine to perform methods steps for establishing a peer-to-
3 peer relationship between a first and a second network-enabled appliance, the method steps
4 comprising:
5 determining the address of the second network-enabled appliance with the first network-
6 enabled appliance, the address of the second network-enabled appliance being associated with
7 the interconnected network;
8 sending a ping message to the second network-enabled appliance from the first network-
9 enabled appliance through the interconnected network;
10 selectively responding to the ping message from the first network-enabled appliance with
11 the second network-enabled appliance;
12 selectively establishing a periodicity between the sending of subsequent periodic ping
13 messages; and
14 periodically selectively sending subsequent periodic ping messages from the first
15 network-enabled appliance to the second network-enabled appliance through the interconnected
16 network where a time interval between the subsequent periodic ping messages is associated with
17 the established periodicity.

1 21. A method for utilizing a resource associated with a network appliance, the
2 resource being cataloged in a directory, the method comprising:
3 querying the directory to determine an address location of the network appliance
4 associated with the resource;
5 commanding the network appliance associated with the resource to perform a function
6 associated with the resource; and
7 the network appliance performing the function associated with the resource.

1 22. The method of Claim 21 wherein the steps of querying and commanding are
2 performed by a network appliance.

1 23. The method of Claim 21 wherein the directory is associated with a server.

1 24. The method of Claim 21 wherein the directory is associated with a directory
2 network appliance.

1 25. A directory for cataloging resources available to a cluster of one or more network
2 appliances, the directory being accessible by the one or more network appliances, the directory
3 comprising:

4 at least one record, the at least one record storing data associated with a network
5 appliance and data associated with a resource associated with the network appliance, the
6 directory operable to receive and respond to queries from the one or more network appliances,
7 the queries requesting the data stored in the at least one record.

1 26. The directory of Claim 25 wherein the directory is associated with a server.

1 27. The directory of Claim 25 wherein the directory is associated with a network
2 appliance.

1 28. The directory of Claim 25, the directory further comprising:

2 at least one shared data object associated with one or more of the one or more network
3 appliances.

1 29. The directory of Claim 25, the directory further comprising:

2 at least one shared configuration object associated with one or more of the one or more
3 network appliances.

1 30. The directory of Claim 25, the directory further comprising:
2 at least one email notification list, the email notification list comprising one or more
3 email addresses.

1 31. The directory of Claim 25, the directory further comprising:
2 at least one SNMP trap notification list.